AGRILUS PANNONICUS (PILLER & MITTERPACHER, 1783) (COL.: BUPRESTIDAE) AND OTHER NOTEWORTHY INSECTS RECORDED FROM HAMPSTEAD HEATH IN 1984

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On the afternoon of 30th June 1984 a deformed adult *Agrilus pannonicus* (=*biguttatus* F.) was found sitting on the bark of a large oak stump on Hampstead Heath. The stump was evidently infested with this rare species, as the thick bark contained more than 600 exit holes. Two sections of the main trunk nearby also had workings of the beetle, though at much lower density, with approximately 60 exit holes in each log. Searches for more adults resulted in one fine specimen being found on adjacent vegetation and a further three being dug out of the bark on the stump, one live and two dead. Stephens (1839) records this buprestid from Hampstead, and the record is repeated in Fowler (1890) and Levy (1977). Allen (1973), who reviews the occurrence of *A. pannonicus* in Britain, also mentions this early record, though nothing further concerning the circumstances and date of capture appears to be known. As no subsequent records seem to have been published from the locality, it is a pleasure to report that this handsome and rare buprestid has continued to survive, undetected, in this area of north London for almost one hundred and fifty years.

Additional visits to the location resulted in further sightings of *A. pannonicus*: 3rd July, 8.30 a.m., one on vegetation beside trunk: 7th July, very hot sunny afternoon, two deformed adults on stump and five flying in the vicinity; 14th July, one adult on stump. Visits on 21st July and thereafter did not result in any further sightings, even in hot sunny weather. Attempts were made to net those specimens flying, but the beetles were able to avoid capture, and those individuals seen sitting on the bark dropped to the ground when approached. It is worth mentioning that on each of the above visits the vegetation was swept thoroughly, but no *A. pannonicus* were obtained; it would seem possible, therefore, that the beetles are alert enough to evade capture by this method.

Two of the specimens observed on the stump exhibited some interesting behaviour; intermittently opening their elytra and exposing the bright, iridescent blue tergites of the abdomen, which in clear sunlight resulted in a flash of bright blue colour. The two individuals concerned continued to do this for some minutes whilst walking over the bark. This may have merely been a result of failed attempts to fly, as both were partly deformed. Alternatively it may have been a form of sexual behavour intended to attract other individuals of the species.

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The exit holes of this beetle are quite distinctive, being almost semi-circular in cross section and in view of their size (approx. 3mm across) they are unlikely to be confused with those of any other species. As mentioned above, a large number of these exit holes were present, particularly in the stump, but not all were a result of the 1984 emergence; at least half appeared to be a year or more old. Many of the convoluted and flat tunnels of the larvae were present under the bark, showing that the larvae initially feed in the layer between the bark and the wood and then bore up into the bark to continue development and form a pupal chamber. Bily (1982) states that larval development takes two years. Buprestidae are sun-loving insects and it was no surprise to note that the majority of the larval workings and exit holes were on the south-facing, sun-exposed aspect of the stump and logs.

Standing oaks of similar age and size near to the fallen tree were examined for the beetle, but no other infestations were found in the immediate vicinity. However, on the 18th August another fallen tree some distance away, in the grounds of Kenwood House, was found to have approximately a dozen exit holes of *A. pannonicus*. This second tree, as well as the original, is within a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and it is encouraging that the park keepers do not remove large sections of dead wood in this area, thus favouring the survival of this rare beetle. It would seem possible that *A. pannonicus* is able to survive at low population densities for long periods of time, perhaps in the tree canopy, but when conditions are favourable it can temporarily become quite numerous.

Other noteworthy insects recorded at Hampstead Heath during 1984 were: COLEOPTERA: *Melasis buprestoides* (L.), elytron in beech log, 14th July; **Axinotarsus marginalis* (Laporte de Castelnau), few sweeping, 7th July; **Silvanus bidentatus* (F.), one under oak bark, 30th June; **Donacia crassipes* F., three on *Nuphar lutea* leaves on Viaduct Pond, 21st July. DIPTERA: *Platycheirus tarsalis* (Sch.) one 28th April; *Volucella inanis* (L.), two on thistle flowers, 18th August; *Chalcosyrphus nemorum* (F.), one on elm log, 9th April. In addition, Mr. R. Jones visited the logs containing *A. pannonicus* and recorded the following noteworthy Coleoptera: **Paromalus flavicornis* (Hbst), 16th October, under oak bark; **Phloiotrya vaudoueri* Muls., 18th July, under bark; **Platypus cylindrus* (F.), 18th July, crawling on stump, 16th October, under bark. Those species marked * are not included in a preliminary list by Buck (1952). My thanks go to Mr. R. Jones for allowing me to quote his records.

References

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Windsor; with some account of its history in Britain. *Entomologist's Rec. J. Var.* **85**: 12-14.
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PARATILLUS CARUS NEWMAN (COL. CLERIDAE) IN THE OPEN AT WINDSOR. — This Australian clerid was first detected in Britain in 1933 in timber imported from Tasmania (Fisher, 1944 *Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **80**:132) and practically all of the subsequent British records have been of its occurrence in or near wood-yards, (or at least in built-up areas), usually in the company of *Lyctus* spp. on which it is parasitic. In view of this, it is perhaps of interest to record its occurrence in the open in Windsor Great Park where, on 2:vii:86, I found a specimen on some freshly cut oak logs under a somewhat blighted old oak tree. There were a few specimens of *Epursa* spp. on the cut surface of the logs but I could see no trace of *Lyctus* spp. on the logs or the tree from which the logs had arisen or on nearby oak trees.

This would appear to be the first definite record of the beetle at Windsor. Donisthorpe (1944 *Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **80**: 161) wrote that a beetle found in his study at Putney in 1933 and initially identified as *Denops albofasciatus* Charp. (Donisthorpe 1933 *Ent. Rec.* **45**: 164) was in fact an example of *P. carus.* He suggested that the source of the beetle had been oak logs, sticks or oak panelling which he had brought to the house from Windsor. In his original note, however, he stated that *Lyctus brunneus* had been "breeding in a dressing table in the room which is now my study." which makes the source of his specimen somewhat uncertain.

The explanation for the presence of this beetle in the open at Windsor is not at present obvious. Both *Lyctus brunneus* Steph. and *L. canaliculatus* Goeze have been recorded from the Windsor area (see Donisthorpe 1939 *Entomologist's mon. Mag.* **74**:77) and both species have been taken there by my friend Mr. A. A. Allen. He tells me, however, that he has not come across either species at Windsor for many years nor have I come across it there in repeated visits during the past 8 years. Although *Lyctus* spp. seem to prefer milled timber, they have been noted at Windsor in boughs and stumps of oak and elm and I know of an old oak tree in Richmond Park which